

Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit

General Information Bulletin

Department for Work and Pensions, 1st Floor, Caxton House, Tothill Street, London SW1 9NA

<http://www.dwp.gov.uk/local-authority-staff/housing-benefit/>

HB/CTB G17/2010

8 November 2010

Contact	Queries about the <ul style="list-style-type: none">• technical content of this bulletin, contact details are given at the end of each article• distribution of this bulletin, contact Corporate Document Services Ltd Orderline Email: orderline@cds.co.uk• bulletin in general, contact Kath Murphy Email: Kath.Murphy@dwp.gsi.gov.uk
Who should read	All Housing Benefit (HB) and Council Tax Benefit (CTB) staff including benefit fraud investigation staff
Action	For information

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Change in the way we count the processing times for extended payments

- 1 A local authority (LA) recently brought to our attention a contradiction in the guidance we give on how we count the processing times (for the purpose of the right time indicator) for in-work claims when an extended payment (EP) is awarded and when it is not.
- 2 When an EP has been awarded we have previously advised that the count for the in-work entitlement part of the claim
 - starts from receipt of the in-work claim form/evidence, and
 - ends when the superseding decision is made
- 3 In all other scenarios, including when an EP has not been awarded, we advise that the count starts from the date of the ETD/CIS Prompt is received notifying LAs that other DWP related benefits have ceased as the customer has started work or increased their hours or earnings.
- 4 In line with policy intent and to capture the whole customer experience in the number of days to process their in-work entitlement the count should start from the date the ETD/CIS Prompt is first retrievable in all scenarios.
- 5 We have updated our change of circumstances FAQs which you can find at <http://www.dwp.gov.uk/local-authority-staff/housing-benefit/performance-and-good-practice/faqs/right-time-faqs-change-events/#change>

Queries

- 6 Any queries or comments should be sent to Performance-Framework@dwp.gsi.gov.uk.

Pension Credit - without making a claim

- 7 The Pension Service (TPS) is looking at new ways to reach pensioners who may be eligible for Pension Credit by paying a small group of people without them making a claim.
- 8 Individuals will receive payment for a period of 12 weeks, in three installments, and they will receive a letter notifying them of their inclusion in the pilot three to four weeks before their first payment. To manage incoming call volumes, the start dates will be staggered over a four week period.

- 9 Free-phone telephone number, 0800 587 8924, will allow customers taking part in the trial access to a dedicated 'Pension Credit Estimate Team'. The lines will be open from 8.30 to 16.00 Monday to Friday for customer enquiries.
- 10 The pilot study is expected to run from 15 November 2010. Plans indicate that the final payments will be made into customer's accounts on 7 March 2011 and the telephone line will close on 18 March 2011.
- 11 We will **never** ask participants to pay back any payments made as part of this trial. This money does not provide "passport" entitlement to HB/CTB and it must not be taken into account as income in a standard HB/CTB claim. It will not affect any benefit application they make now or in the future and it will not be taxed.
- 12 We expect enquiries to be minimal but to help with some possible queries you may receive please refer to the frequently asked questions available on the DWP Adviser and Intermediaries website, <http://www.dwp.gov.uk/adviser/updates/pc%2Dwithout%2Dclaiming/questions%2Dand%2Danswers%2Dabout%2Dpension/>

Change of contact details for Social Security Administration Act 1992 information requests from esure insurance

- 13 This is an update for **esure contact details for Social Security Administration Act 1992 (SSAA) information requests**.

- 14 From now, please send all SSAA queries for **esure** to

Matt Gilham
Head of Financial Crime
esure
The Observatory
Reigate
Surrey
RH2 0SG

Fax: 01737 235549
Tel: 01737 641236

Queries

- 15 For further advice or information about this item, please contact diane.pryde@dwp.gsi.gov.uk

Measuring right benefit and right time information – delay to quality assurance exercise

- 16 HB/CTB Circular A18/2010 set out DWP's intention to carry out a quality assurance exercise covering both the volumes (claims and changes) underpinning the speed of processing information and the information required to construct the new right benefit information.
- 17 Our aim was to provide data to LAs by the end of October / early November 2010. However, early internal quality assurance work has identified a number of issues with the T records. We need to resolve these issues before sharing the data more widely. Therefore we intend to consult directly with a small number of LAs and software suppliers in the first instance and expect to be in a position to send data to all LAs during December.
- 18 We are hopeful that the delay in the quality assurance exercise will not impact on the proposed publication dates as set out in HB/CTB Circular A18/2010. We will keep you informed with further updates.

Queries

- 19 If you have any queries or concerns about this subject, please email performance-framework@dwp.gsi.gov.uk.

HB/CTB performance - Frequently Asked Questions

- 20 We would like to bring to your attention the following recent updates to our HB/CTB performance Frequently Asked Questions on a number of performance areas
- an amendment on how to count the processing times (for the purpose of the right time indicator) for in-work claims when an extended payment (EP) is or is not awarded
 - a change around the count for telephone notified changes of circumstance in line with the new provision to the related regulation
 - clarification on how to deal with a claim form when received with no signature and examples of when this is deemed defective or not valid
 - inclusion of the Tell Us Once and CIS Prompt initiatives
- 21 The FAQs can be found on the HB/CTB section of the DWP resources centre website using the following link <http://www.dwp.gov.uk/local-authority-staff/housing-benefit/performance-and-good-practice/faqs/>

Queries

- 22 If you require any more details on any of these changes please contact us Performance.Framework@dwp.gsi.gov.uk